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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/821,810	03/30/2001	Ichiro Fukuoka	AI 204	5003

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EXAMINER

BARNES, CRYSTAL J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2121

DATE MAILED: 01/12/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/821,810

Applicant(s)

FUKUOKA ET AL.

Examiner

Crystal J. Barnes

Art Unit

2121

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 30 March 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-3, 7, 9, 11, 15, 17, 18 and 21-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 4-6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 19 and 20 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☒ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 30 March 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Priority

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference sign(s) not mentioned in the description: reference number 40 in figure 14; steps S2 and S12 in figures 15A and 18A; step S49 in figures 17A and 20A; figures 21 and 47; step S94 in figure 23; step P11 in figure 33; and step P44 in figures 35 and 37 are not mentioned in the specification. A proposed drawing correction, corrected drawings, or amendment to the specification to add the reference sign(s) in the description, are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.
3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the

description: display part 80 (see page 31 lines 10-11) does not appear in figure 28.

A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

4. The drawings are objected to because "Yes" and "No" for step T5 in figure 44 is not shown. A proposed drawing correction or corrected drawings are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Specification

5. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: "(step S95)" on page 27 line 4 should be "(step S94)" (see figure 23); "when" on page 35 line 10 and page 36 line 4 should be "then"; "steeling" on page 43 lines 20, 22 should be "stealing"; "massage" on page 45 line 19 and page 47 line 1 should be "message"; "FIG. 43E" on page 49 line 14 should be "FIG. 43A" (see figure 47 step T33) and "FIG. 43F" on page 49 line 18 should be "FIG. 43B" (see figure 47 step T35).
Appropriate correction is required.

6. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

Claim Objections

7. Claims 11, 12, 14, 17 and 19 objected to because of the following informalities: the term "radiocommunication" should be "radio communication". Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

8. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

9. Claims 1, 2 and 9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

10. Regarding claim 1, the phrase "such as" renders the claim indefinite because it is unclear whether the limitations following the phrase are part of the claimed invention. See MPEP § 2173.05(d).

11. Regarding claim 2, the phrase "for with the laundry managing server" fails to conform to current U.S. practice because it appears to be a grammatical and/or idiomatic error.

12. Claim 9 recites the limitation "the request for permission to unload the laundry" in lines 1-2 of the claim. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

13. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite in that it fails to point out what is included or excluded by the claim language. This claim is an omnibus type claim. The claim should read "The control program according to claim 21 ...".

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

14. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless -

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

15. Claims 1, 3, 7, 15 and 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USPN 5,799,281 to Login et al.

As per claim 1, the Login et al. reference discloses a laundry system comprising laundry equipment which comprises a plurality of laundry machines (see columns 3-4 lines 66-2, "laundry machines") such as washing machines ("washing machines 110") and dryers ("dryers 112"), and a laundry managing server (see column 4 lines 3-5, "computer 102") for managing the laundry equipment ("laundry machines"), wherein: the laundry equipment ("laundry machines") comes into an operable state by receiving a signal for permitting operation (see column 6 lines 28-37, "on/off switch can be activated") thereof from the laundry managing server ("computer 102"), and transmits operational information to the laundry managing server ("computer 102") in response to operation of the laundry equipment ("laundry machines") which has become operable; and the laundry managing server ("computer 102") comprises means for confirming validity of customer identification data (see column 8 line 14, "user identification prompts 620") when receiving the customer identification data ("user identification prompts 620")

along with specific information for identifying laundry equipment that the customer desires to use (see column 8 lines 25-27, "number of the laundry machine intended for use 702") from a portable communication tool of the customer (see column 4 lines 55-57, "touch tone phone 218") and transmitting a signal to the laundry equipment ("laundry machines") that has been identified by the specific information ("number of the laundry machine intended for use 702") so as to permit operation of the laundry equipment ("laundry machines"), and means for receiving the operational information (see column 8 lines 34-39, "transaction log file 724", "machine usage statistics files 726") from the laundry equipment ("laundry machines") and creating bill data (see column 5 lines 15-19, "prepaid debit accounts 252, invoiced accounts 254, card accounts 256") for charging the customer based on the customer identification data ("user identification prompts 620") and the operational information ("transaction log file 724", "machine usage statistics files 726").

As per claim 3, the Login et al. reference discloses the means for creating bill data (see column 5 lines 15-19, "prepaid debit accounts 252, invoiced accounts 254, card accounts 256") memorize a billing amount based on the operational information of the customer for a prescribed period (see column 8 lines 33-38,

"accounting file 722"), and create bill data based on aggregation of the billing amount for the prescribed period "accounting file 722").

As per claim 7, the Login et al. reference discloses a laundry system comprising laundry equipment having a plurality of laundry machines (see columns 3-4 lines 66-2, "laundry machines") for carrying out prescribed treatments including a washing machine ("washing machines 110") for washing laundry and a dryer ("dryers 112") for drying laundry, and a laundry managing server ("computer 102") for managing the laundry equipment ("laundry machines"), wherein: means for transmitting a notice of completion of a prescribed treatment (see column 8 lines 17-19, "automatic notification when laundry machine function is complete 634") for the laundry in the laundry machine ("laundry machines") to a portable communication tool of a customer (see column 11 lines 21-23, "voice, facsimile, or email message 1224") in response to the completion of the treatment ("automatic notification when laundry machine function is complete 634").

As per claim 15, the Login et al. reference discloses a customer file (see column 8 lines 36-38, "transaction log file 724") memorizing at least customer identification data ("account number, account holder, account balance, account type") that have been predetermined between the laundry managing server

("computer 102") and a customer ("user"); means capable of communicating with the laundry equipment ("laundry machines") and a portable communication tool (see column 4 lines 55-57, "touch tone phone 218") owned by the customer for transmitting a signal for permitting operation to the laundry equipment that has been identified by information for identifying the laundry equipment that the customer desires to use (see column 8 lines 25-27, "number of the laundry machine intended for use 702"), the transmission being carried out in response to receipt of the customer identification data ("account number, account holder, account balance, account type") and the information for identifying the laundry equipment ("number of the laundry machine intended for use 702") transmitted from the portable communication tool of the customer ("touch tone phone 218"); means for receiving operational information transmitted from the laundry equipment when the laundry equipment is driven to operate (see column 8 lines 34-39, "transaction log file 724", "machine usage statistics files 726"); and means for storing the received operational information in the customer file by summing up the operational information by customer ("transaction log file 724"), and outputting the operational information as a laundry equipment usage rate of the customer at prescribed periods ("machine usage statistics files 726").

As per claim 21, the rejection of claim 15 is incorporated and further claim 21 contains limitations recited in claim 15; therefore claim 21 is rejected under the same rationale as claim 15.

As per claim 22, the Login et al. reference discloses (see column 8 lines 4-7, "A laundry system control program ...").

As per claim 23, the rejection of claim 1 is incorporated and further claim 23 contains limitations recited in claim 1; therefore claim 23 is rejected under the same rationale as claim 1.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

16. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

17. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,799,281 to Login et al. in view of USPN 5,757,643 to Kuroda et al.

As per claim 2, the Login et al. reference does not expressly disclose the laundry equipment includes a store controller (DTC) connected to the plurality of laundry machines by communication means, the store controller has another communication means for with the laundry managing server.

The Kuroda et al. reference discloses

(see column 3 lines 49-61, "... management company 1 for managing a plurality of launderettes 2 ... machine 8a such as a dryer and a washing machine ... machine 9a such as a dryer and a washing machine ...")

(see column 5 lines 3-16, "... DTC 7 calls the microcomputers 8b of the first machine block 8 ... necessary data can also be transmitted to the central control apparatus 3 ...")

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify the computer of the computer control and management system taught by the Login et al. reference to function as the DTC in the remote management system taught by the Kuroda et al. reference.

One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the computer of the computer control and management system to function as the DTC

in the remote management system to provide remote access to control operations, record activities, and monitor multiple laundry machines in several facilities.

18. Claims 11, 17 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over USPN 5,799,281 to Login et al. in view of US Pub. No. 2001/0056502 A1 to Hollstrom et al.

As per claim 11, the Login et al. reference does not expressly disclose the laundry equipment being capable of communicating with the portable communication tool of the customer by the first specified low-power, short-range radio communication means, while the portable communication tool of the customer being capable of transmitting contents of the communication with the laundry equipment to the laundry managing server by the second radio communication means other than the first specified low-power radio communication means.

The Hollstrom reference discloses

(see page 2 [0019], "... user of a mobile telephone 1 or another type of portable telecommunication apparatus will be able to access, control and operate ... home appliances or other external electronic utility devices ...")

(see page 2 [0023], "The mobile telephone 1 ... establishing a short-range radio link 32 ... vending machine ...")

(see pages 4-5 [0049], "a user may purchase ... pay for it by using his/her mobile telephone 1.")

(see page 5 [0051], "... applicable to other electronic utility devices ...")

At the time the invention was made, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to modify touch tone phone taught by the Login et al. reference with the portable telecommunication apparatus taught by the Hollstrom et al. reference.

One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to modify the touch tone phone with the portable communication apparatus to provide an easier way of accessing, controlling, and operating electronic devices in a standardized and user-friendly fashion.

As per claim 17, the Login et al. reference discloses means for requesting input of a predetermined password (see column 8 lines 47-50, "pass code 808"); means for requesting input of identification information for identifying the laundry equipment and the laundry machine (see column 8 lines 25-27, "number of the laundry machine intended for use 702"); and communication means for transmitting

the password ("pass code 808") and the identification information ("number of the laundry machine intended for use 702") that have been inputted by radio communication.

As per claim 18, the Login et al. reference discloses the communication means receive at least a signal informing whether the password has been verified (see column 8 lines 50-52, "pass code valid 812") or not after transmitting the password ("pass code 808").

Allowable Subject Matter

19. Claims 4-6, 8, 10, 12-14, 16, 19 and 20 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

20. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

The following patents are cited to further show the state of the art with respect to cashless transactions in general:

USPN 5,225,977 to Hooper et al.

USPN 5,704,046 to Hogan

USPN 6,061,668 to Sharrow

USPN 6,167,387 to Lee-Wai-Yin

USPN 6,356,881 B1 to Milch et al.

The following patents are cited to further show the state of the art with respect to remote management in general:

USPN 5,386,362 to Keret

USPN 6,275,500 B1 to Callaway, Jr. et al.

USPN 6,434,403 B1 to Ausems et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Crystal J. Barnes whose telephone number is 703.306.5448. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday alternate Mondays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Anil Khatrri can be reached on 703.305.0282. The fax phone

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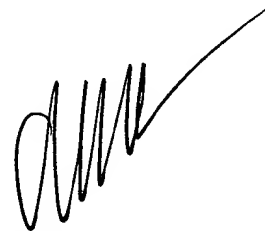
number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is

(703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.305.3900.

cjb

January 8, 2004

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

ANIL KHATRI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER